

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

These guidelines are offered to enable the formation of professionally competent and spiritually mature spiritual directors in the courses and training events offered across the Regional Training Partnership.

What is Spiritual Direction?

Spiritual Direction - sometimes known as Spiritual Accompaniment – is the prayerful ministry by which one Christian accompanies another, seeking to assist them to discern the place and work of God in their life and to deepen their relationship with God.

What is a Spiritual Director?

A spiritual director is an individual, ordained or lay, who has discerned with others that she or he has a ministry of holy listening and empathy. The joy and purpose of a spiritual director is to enable another person to discern God at work in their lives, and to hear God's call and direction. The spiritual director does not lead or decide for another (despite the implication in the word *direction*), but accompanies that person prayerfully.

What is needed in a Spiritual Director?

Spiritual directors are people of prayer and integrity, who are

self-aware and conscious of their own relationship with God. They will be aware of the riches of spiritual wisdom to be found in scripture and in our Christian heritage. Their love for God and their experience of the love of God will enhance their openness in their care for others and enrich their listening and their empathy. They offer a sacred and safe space to help the other person deepen their personal awareness of themselves and of others in all areas of life. In the spiritual direction conversation, the guide is the Holy Spirit, and so the relationship is one of coming alongside another and exploring the movement of God within. Spiritual directors minister out of their awareness of their own humanity, and their consciousness that we all stand in need of God's love and forgiveness.

What is good practice in Spiritual Direction?

It is recommended that every spiritual director will:

- be committed to a regular pattern of prayer and engage in the wider life of the Church, and be regularly receiving spiritual direction themselves;
- have been through a process of discernment which has recognised that they are suitable for this ministry;
- have attended a training course which is considered adequate and appropriate, or demonstrate appropriate experience in this ministry;
- be connected to a network, in which there is some regular accountability (e.g. an annual return);
- recognise the safeguarding issues which may arise in the course of spiritual direction, and abide by the safeguarding policy of the network to which they belong (it is recommended that all spiritual directors have current DBS clearance);

- engage in regular supervision for this ministry, either in a group or a one-to-one setting;
- participate regularly in events for their own growth, training and development, as well as continuing to read and reflect by themselves;
- be aware of the differences and boundaries between spiritual direction, counselling, coaching and mentoring, be clear about the distinctive nature of the ministry of spiritual direction, and be willing to assist people to seek appropriate help elsewhere when necessary;
- discuss expectations, boundaries and confidentiality at the beginning of a new spiritual direction relationship;
- review the spiritual direction relationship with each directee on a regular basis (e.g. annually);
- not ordinarily relate to the directee in another context (e.g. friend, colleague, supervisor);
- at all times act in a way that respects the personal and spiritual integrity and wellbeing of the directee.

If you have any questions relating to spiritual direction, please contact:

These good practice guidelines were developed with reference to the guidelines published by the Retreat Association in 2016: <http://www.retreats.org.uk/documents/spiritual-direction-guidelines.pdf>.

